'No such thing as abeyance in int'l treaty law'

KARACHI: Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah on Sunday said India's claim of placing the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in "abeyance" has no legal basis and that the treaty remains fully in force under international law.

Speaking to *Geo News*, Mr Shah talked about the legality of India holding the IWT in abeyance and said: "As far as holding the treaty in abeyance is concerned, the word 'abeyance' is not recognised under international treaty law. It is a coined term, because we believe India understands that it cannot suspend, breach or terminate the treaty."

In April 2025, India held the IWT in abeyance following the attack on tourists in occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 — an incident New Delhi blamed on Islamabad without evidence.

Pakistan termed any attempt to suspend its water share an "act of war". In June, the Permanent Court of Arbitration held that India cannot unilaterally hold the treaty in abeyance.

However, Mr Shah cautioned that India's continued non-cooperation within the rules-based framework, effectively sidestepping its obligations on self-created grounds, was "alarming" and prompted Pakistan to pursue a formal and carefully calibrated legal and diplomatic response.

"To address this, Pakistan is employing efforts carefully, and whatever steps are being taken are formal in nature," he said.

He said the treaty was carefully negotiated to withstand political tensions and disputes, stressing that its dispute-resolution mechanism was designed to prevent unilateral actions.

"It was a well-thought-out pact. There was a clause in the pact that in the face of conflict, Pakistan and India will peacefully solve the water matter. Otherwise, they will hand it to a neutral party," Mr Shah said.

He added, "The 12th and last article of this treaty has four provisions. In the last paragraph, it says that with the passage of time, some changes can be made to the pact, but both parties have to mutually agree; otherwise, the pact will remain fully enforced.

"And it clearly says that no one party can unilaterally change it," the water commissioner stressed. Asked whether the IWT favoured India, Mr Shah replied that the three eastern rivers — Beas, Ravi and Sutlej — have a "geographic advantage", unlike the western rivers.

Recalling the history of water disputes between the two neighbours, Mr Shah said India halted the rivers' flow to Pakistan on March 31, 1948, which Pakistan protested on a bilateral level and took the issue to the United Nations.

The official noted there were two third-party forums where conflicts could be taken — "one is a neutral forum, and the other is the Court of Arbitration forum". The procedure for it, Mr Shah added, was that the water commissioners must inform each other and suggest whether the matter should go to a neutral party or a court.—Dawn Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Police officials and family members participate in the funeral prayers of three martyred traffic policemen at the police lines.—Dawn

Four KP policemen martyred in separate attacks

Continued from Page 1

Sohail Afridi condemned the attacks.

While President Zardari and PM Shehbaz paid rich tribute to their sacrifices in the line of duty, the KP CM vowed that the country's enemies would not be allowed to succeed in their nefarious designs.

In a statement, the president conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and saluted the supreme sacrifices of the martyred police officials. He said the services and sacrifices of the police and security forces for the maintenance of peace and public order were a source of pride for the nation.

PM Shehbaz, meanwhile, said police had always played a frontline role in ensuring peace and security, and reaffirmed the governments resolve to continue supporting law enforcement agencies in their efforts to safeguard citizens.

"Sacrifices of the martyred policemen will not go in vain," CM Afridi said in the statement.

He said that policemen were on the frontline in the fight against militancy and they had been rendering great sacrifices. He said the attackers would be brought to justice and the provincial government stood with the police. He extended condolences to members of bereaved families and prayed for the departed souls.

Young girl dies, five relatives hurt as overhead water tank bursts

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: A young girl was killed and five other members of her family were seriously injured when an overhead fiber-made water storage tank burst near their house on Sunday.

Police officials said that the incident occurred at around 5am on Sunday in Muslim Etihad Colony in the provincial capital.

An insecure fibre-made overhead water tank with a capacity of about 50,000 gallons of water, equivalent to 50 big water tankers, suddenly burst, releasing a massive amount of water.

It swept away a nearby house and killed the girl inside the house and seriously injured her father, mother and three other family members.

Police said they have arrested the owner of the water supply facility and further investigation into the incident is under way.

Labour leaders urge training for mining safety

QUETTA: Leaders of the Pakistan Central Mines Labour Federation (PCMLF) have called for urgent measures to protect the lives of mine workers, warning that despite generating billions of rupees in revenue, the mining sector continues to neglect workers' health and safety.

In a joint statement, PCMLF Central Secretary General Sultan Muhammad Khan, along with union leaders Abdul Sattar and Abdul Halim Khan, said that due to the contractor system, labour safety laws are largely ignored in the mining sector.

They noted that mine collapses and gas emissions remain common, resulting in the deaths of around 150 mine workers and leaving more than 1,000 others disabled in coal mines across Pakistan last year.

The leaders added that accidents have recently increased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to the poor performance of mine department staff.

According to a press release, Mr Khan urged the government to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of coal miners.

He demanded the abolition of the contractor system and stressed that mine inspections must be carried out using modern machinery to help prevent accidents.—Muhammad Akbar Notezai

Centenary celebrations of Baloch scholar held in Gwadar

- Speakers pay tribute to Syed Zahoor Hashmi for his services to Balochi
- Ex-CM Dr Malik lauds decision to dedicate 2026 to literary figure

By Behram Baloch

GWADAR: The centenary celebrations of renowned linguist, researcher, literary figure and poet late Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi have formally begun in the port city of Gwadar.

In this connection, an event was recently jointly organised by several social, cultural and literary organisations, with the support of the Gwadar Municipal Committee, at the RCD Council's Syed Hashmi Auditorium.

Former Balochistan chief minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch attended as the chief guest, while Gwadar MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, Municipal Committee Chairman Majid Johar, Syed Hashmi Academy President Ali Issa, and Balochistan Academy General Secretary Maqbool Nasir were among the prominent participants.

The event was presided over by Gwadar RCD Council President Haji Abdul Ghani.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Abdul Malik Baloch paid rich tribute to Syed Hashmi's outstanding services to the Balochi language and literature.

He said that after Mulla Fazil, Syed Hashmi held the most prominent and comprehensive position in Balochi literary history.

Decision lauded

He appreciated the decision to dedicate 2026 to Syed Hashmi with year-long activities and announced further financial support for the publication of the late poet's books.

MPA Hidayat-ur-Rehman assured full cooperation in organising events throughout the year across the country, calling Syed Hashmi the pride of Gwadar and a valuable asset of Balochi literature. He said the centenary celebrations would provide the younger generation with an opportunity to better understand and research his work.

Mr Johar announced that Gwadar would become the first municipality in Balochistan to install signboards in the Balochi language. He also said digital counters and official announcements at the municipal office would be made in Balochi, with plans to introduce Balochi shop signboards across the city.

Other speakers highlighted Syed Hashmi's literary, linguistic and cultural contributions, stressing the need to promote the Balochi language and work towards its use as a medium of instruction.

The ceremony also featured a themed poetry recital by young poets, a theatre screening by Khairjan Art Academy, and a musical evening in which renowned artists performed Syed Hashmi's poetry.

The event concluded with appreciation for all partner organisations and the announcement that upcoming literary events, including the Gwadar Book Fair, would also be dedicated to Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi.

53 Chagai students to get scholarships

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) has officially announced the results of the entry test for its six-month Foundation Programme, under which 53 talented male and female students from Chagai district have secured fully funded scholarships.

The selected students will enroll in a six-month Foundation Programme at IBA Sukkur.

Upon successful completion of the programme, if the students qualify for undergraduate programmes at any university in Pakistan, Reko Diq Mining Company will bear all related educational expenses.

Local circles have termed the initiative a positive development for Chagai district, stating that RDMC's step will play a vital role in opening doors to higher education for the region's youth and in laying the foundation for a brighter future.

Three new firms seek to sell gas as existing licensees remain idle

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: As around a dozen existing licensees mostly remain non-operational, three new companies have applied for licences to sell natural gas following policy changes that allow greater private participation in the gas network.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) has formally admitted applications from Blue Gas (Pvt) Ltd, Essen Gas Marketing & Distribution Ltd and Master Marketing International for licences to undertake the regulated activity of natural gas sales.

In their applications, the companies said they would use the pipeline networks of the two public-sector utilities — Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Ltd (SSGCL) — to transport gas produced from local fields to consumers as permitted under the Third-Party Access Rules, the Pakistan Gas Network Code and virtual networks. Such arrangements are allowed under the 2012 petroleum policy, recently amended by the federal cabinet.

Ogra has scheduled a public hearing for Jan 16 and invited comments from stakeholders before deciding on the grant of licences.

The regulator has already issued about a dozen licences to private firms for the sale of natural gas, but only one company — Universal Gas Distribution Company (UGDC) — has been able to practically enter into gas sale and purchase agreements with producers, consumers and transporters like SNGPL and begin commercial operations.

SNGPL and SSGCL, which enjoyed a legal monopoly over gas sales and distribution for decades, formally lost exclusivity in 2010. However, the enabling legal and regulatory framework for third-party participation remained weak for much of the following decade, effectively preserving their dominance until last year.

In January 2025, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec), led by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, approved the sale of 35 per cent of new gas finds to third-party private entities through a bidding process. The move was aimed at easing liquidity challenges on exploration and production (E&P) companies and attracting $4-5 billion in fresh investment in offshore exploration.

In January 2024, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) — comprising the chief ministers of all four provinces — allowed E&P companies to sell reserves to third parties and directed the petroleum division and gas utilities to develop a framework for the sale of 35pc of unallocated gas to third parties and get it approved by the Ecnec.

The two public-sector gas utilities had been delaying the implementation and lobbied to reverse the CCI decision for almost a year, but Mr Dar-led Ecnec finally concluded that neither the council's decision could be reversed nor a prospective $4-5bn investment in offshore blocks could be postponed. The government has since awarded around two dozen exploration licences, both in offshore and onshore basins, to local and international firms.

Eight bodies found in Zhob and Musakhail

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Eight bullet-riddled and tortured bodies have been found in Zhob and Musakhail districts, officials said on Sunday.

They said that four bodies were found in Musakhail area on January 2 while four more bodies were found in border areas of Zhob and Musakhail districts.

The people of the area informed the local administration of Zhob about four unknown bodies in an abandoned area near the border of the two districts.

Assistant commissioner of Musakhail said that soon after receiving information about the presence of bodies, Levies Force personnel rushed to the area and took bodies into their custody and shifted them to a basic health unit in Kingri.

"All the four unknown people were shot from a close range, which caused their death on the spot," Assistant Commissioner Musakhail Najeeb Ullah Kakar said.

He said that over the last three days eight bodies have been found so far. "Four other bullet-riddled bodies were found in an abandoned area of Musakhail on January 2.

The bodies have marks of bullet injuries," he said.

"Three out of four previous bodies were identified by the local people," Mr Kakar said, adding that the three victims identified by the people belonged to different areas of Harnai district.

He said the motive behind the killing is yet to be ascertained and further investigation is under way.

After off-loading spree, new desk to guide air travellers

Continued from Page 1

Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Multan," he added.

Last month, FIA authorities told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development that it offloaded 66,154 passengers from Pakistani Airports in 2025 compared to 2024's figure of 35,000.

Initially, FIA authorities were reluctant to share details of the large-scale offloading of international travellers, despite repeated media queries and complaints from passengers who said they were stopped despite holding valid travel documents.

After 'hinting' at talks, KP CM says he'll go by Imran's instructions

Continued from Page 1

Peshawar on Friday.

Mr Afridi was also reported to have said that if "any ceremony or meeting takes place, he would definitely meet" Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

During his visit to Lahore, CM Afridi had cast doubt on the government's sincerity in holding talks with the PTI and said he was actively making efforts to initiate the party's street movement by reaching out to multiple stakeholders.

Asked whether he believed issues with the federal government could be resolved through talks, Afridi had said during his Lahore visit that Mr Khan had assigned responsibility for "dialogue or protest" to the TTAP.

About his upcoming visit to Karachi, CM Afridi wrote on the X post that Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, "respecting democratic values and the dignity of his office", had invited him for a meeting.

Mr Afridi said he thanked Mr Shah for the invitation and told him that he would meet "the people of my province" and that, if they had any concerns or issues, he would definitely meet the Sindh chief minister to address them.

Pakistan, China reaffirm bond amid regional tensions

Continued from Page 1

historic significance of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations and agreed to utilise the milestone to chart a forward-looking vision for enhanced cooperation, including under CPEC.

Mr Ding also conveyed New Year greetings to the leadership and people of Pakistan.

'Shared future'

According to China's state-run *Xinhua* news agency, Mr Ding called for joint efforts to speed up the process of building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era and to continue improving the well-being of the two peoples.

"China is willing to work with Pakistan to follow the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two countries, shore up political mutual trust and mutual support, better synergise development plans, improve quality and performance of pragmatic cooperation, and enhance communication and coordination regarding major international and regional affairs," he added.

Xinhua quoted Mr Dar as saying that Pakistan adhered to the one-China principle and was ready to use the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to further promote the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

In another statement, the FO said Mr Dar also met Liu Haixing, minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China.

Mr Dar congratulated Mr Liu on the successful convening of the 4th Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee.

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the steady and forward-looking trajectory of bilateral relations while reviewing party-to-party exchanges, regional developments and progress on various CPEC projects.

They also agreed to jointly commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations in "a befitting and meaningful manner".

CHILDLIFE FOUNDATION

TENDERING

Invitation to Suppliers

ChildLife Foundation (CLF) Pakistan is a Public-Private partnership and runs Pediatric Emergency Rooms across the country. The foundation invites Prequalification proposals & Bids from Reputable Companies for various areas as detailed in the link below.

https://tinyurl.com/24swjb2p

Tenders should be submitted at thetender1234@gmail.com by Monday, 19 January 2025 - 05:00 PM (deadline)

PUBLIC NOTICE

EY FORD RHODES: RETIREMENT OF PARTNER

We would like to inform that Mr. Aamir Younas s/o Muhammad Younas has opted for voluntarily retirement as an Active Partner of the Firm with effect from 12 January 2026.

We wish to thank Mr. Aamir Younas for his services to the Firm. While we say goodbye, we wish him the best in the future.

EY Ford Rhodes, Chartered Accountants, Firm Registration No. 2002/0931, has its Principal Office located at 17th Floor, Sky Tower – West Wing, Dolmen City, HC-3, Block 4, Scheme 5, Clifton, Karachi and branch offices at Lahore and Islamabad. If any individual, company or organization has any objection with regard to this notice, kindly contact the said Firm or the Registrar of Firms, State Life Building No. 11, 2nd Floor, Abdullah Haroon Road, Karachi, within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. Upon conclusion of the period of seven (7) days, no objection would be acceptable or entertained and the Firm and the aforesaid retired partner shall not be responsible thereof in any manner whatsoever.